

Social issues of computing research paper sample

[Law](#), [Criminal Justice](#)



Child Predation

The development of the internet over the last 20 years has resulted to the improvement in communication both socially and in the business community. There has been an increase in access to plenty of information. However, despite the internet being a valuable tool, it has resulted to increased hazards towards the safety of children. Child predation via the internet has become easy due to the presence of online solicitation and increased access to inappropriate material (Dombrowski, Gischlar, and Durst, 2007). The internet also allows different individuals to be able to misrepresent themselves via online chat rooms, which makes it easy to trick young children on the internet. It becomes crucial to develop or come up with ways of safeguarding children since studies in the United States indicate that internet usage among young people has increased, which increases the exposure to the threats available online. Predation becomes easy especially where the children have not been trained on the level of information they can share. According to Dombrowski, Gischlar, and Durst (2007), most people who start online relationships tend to share sensitive and deep information an effect referred to as the internet disinhibition effect. Child predators impersonate young persons with similar interests and age as a way of tricking the vulnerable children.

According to Stranger (2005), a report by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) indicated that there is an increase in child predation on the internet. The report indicated that one in five children between the ages of ten and seventeen received inappropriate solicitation over the internet, in the year 2004 (Stranger, 2005). These figures are bound

to have increased by 2012. Furthermore, the report indicated that some of the predators had aggressively solicited contact from the children via telephone, letters, and gifts.

Child predating has become a common occurrence in today's web life. This has been highly favored by the fact that in today's web life, it is too open, and anybody can post anything or connect with anybody. It is simply a chaotic and unprotected environment. Children spend a lot of time online chatting with friends and sometimes with strangers, people they totally do not know. These child predators under state their ages and later on try to make physical inappropriate advances. First, it starts as an online seduction, which later leads to a meeting (Hansen, 2004). Child predation mainly affects the naive and inexperienced young children who are vulnerable (Wolak, Finkelhor, Mitchell, and Ybarra, 2008).

In a recent research (Crimes against Children Research Centre), it indicates that one in five U. S teenagers who are active or regular web user they have received unwanted inappropriate solicitation, they either involve them via inappropriate talks or by giving personal private information. It goes on and states that 25% of children have been shown pornographic material online that is either pictures or motion movies. This is extremely alarming and poses a particularly high risk to children. The predators perfect their skills and expertise through building trust and confidence with the vulnerable children. They blend into the victim's environment patiently waiting to see how the intended target will react and when an opportunity comes by, they take advantage and full control of the situation.

Most of predators use the internet to approach and intimidate victims via

harassing and threatening the children (McQuade, Colt, and Meyer, 2009). Cyber bullying occurs differently from the normal bullying that is experienced in schools. The bullies on the internet adopt fake identities. Cyber bullying becomes difficult to control especially in cases where certain infectious remarks of hatred concerning an individual spread quickly and become out of control.

Social, Legal and Ethical Issues

They are many social, ethical, and legal issues surrounding children on the internet, to start with social issues on the internet we find out that it has both positive and negative effects on the internet users. Negative effect can be internet addiction to the children, safety concern because, with the rise of chat rooms, the parent or guardian may not be aware of whom the children are chatting with online. Children can also go to the extent of divulging personal information to strangers, and this would pose, as a big threat to the security of the children.

Internet addiction is a pervasive problem amongst children. However, there are positive social effects of the internet on a child, which includes, but not limited to access of information from all over the world at a click of a button. Exposure to reading material and healthy-fun games for child growth also opens the children and helps them learn in a fun way and share different experiences between each other. An example of such a website that children can learn from is the Sesame Street website (). Children get to learn about other people's way of life through cultural exchange. The availability of shopping online is another positive impact that the internet has brought forth. Children get a chance of shopping and buying books, which are not

easily accessible online. On the other hand, social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter can be classified as bad websites since they tend to affect the attention spans of young teenagers (Derbyshire, 2009). These websites have also increased avenues through which predators and cyber bullies can use to reach their potential victims.

On the ethical aspect, the internet poses an immense danger to children since it provides access to illegal downloading of music, television shows, movies, books, or other media of which they have not paid a downloading fee. Free speech is a dilemma when children are able to access pornography or view other indecent material online (Basse, 2008). Another ethical issue is children deciding to spam email account holders. They might send bullying emails or pictures.

On the legal issues, the rise of the internet has brought forth many new legal issues such as child identity theft. This type of identity theft is gaining a lot of recognition since it favors most the perpetrators. As long as the identity thief is undetected, the more the benefits he can reap. One of the reasons it is gaining popularity is because most parents are unaware that their children are at a risk. Since the credit card issuance does not involve a face-to-face meeting, physical verification of the credit card applicant becomes a difficult task for the credit card company. Furthermore, the age of first time applicants is normally determined during the initial application. An initial age set at 24 years becomes the age for that particular name and will remain so until it is changed later. This type of fraud has resulted in many young children being denied entrance to colleges since their names have a bad credit reputation. In addition, distribution of child-related inappropriate content is also illegal. It can be

in the form of inappropriate explicit images or videos featuring minors. With all this social, legal, and ethical issues being exposed to the minors, it is extremely important to protect children from certain internet contents.

Legal Controls

Legal controls act as a big control in the governance of the chaotic network. The lawmakers should make it a punishable offence with hefty fines for commercial websites, which make materials that are harmful to the minors available this would help curb massive circulation of harmful information. Secondly, the governing body should make sure that the laws set are collectively enforced; otherwise, the laws would lose the meaning.

In addition, they should be appropriate liability for cases where system failures occur. Legal sanctions should be placed for websites, which discloses or makes unethical material available to the children. Protecting children on the internet should go beyond just installing a content filter and thinking that all is well (Baase, 2008). This can be achieved through a proactive plan taking into account all devices with internet access. A parent or a guardian plays an important role in helping children have a safe and positive experience online.

The rules for risk management indicate that to develop an effective plan, children should have limited access to the internet. Children mistakenly and deliberately share personal information without realizing they may be subject to identity theft. Taking an active role in the cyber life of children allows parents to share and answer questions children may have on the internet.

Below are some suggestions

- Lock down the minors PCs by ensuring that the administrator account is disabled and limit or remove the ability to install new software.
- Take control of all the administrative password, may it be for Wi-Fi or any other devices because, without them, parents may fail to keep up ahead of the approaches the children use today to deceive their parents.
- Place the computer in public places where everyone can see what is being viewed.
- Warn the children, educate them about the dangers involved regarding use of unpleasant sites, and discuss openly the issues involved.
- Parents should monitor the time spent online to ensure that children do not over indulge. This can be achieved by blocking inappropriate content (Microsoft Coporation).
- If the children are in their teens and they use social networking site, review what they have posted and monitor all usage.
- Trust no one online whose real identity is unfamiliar. Ensure kids do not talk to any strangers online (Microsoft Corporation)
- Remove web camera on PCs and disable built in devices on laptops. The children have no use for such.
- Block popular search engines for the minors in middle school with a content filter program. Examples include the Golden Eye program that has the ability to monitor and record all activity on a computer. The program serves as a surveillance camera and is able to record everything on the computer. Another program that can be used is the Microsoft Parental Control, which assists in managing children's use of the computer (Johnson, 2010).

- Parent or guardian should create a habit of exploring the internet with the children. Consider visiting child friendly websites.
- Know what your children are doing online, ensure that they know how to stay safe and encourage them to pass any suspicious information, or if anybody says or does something that makes them feel uncomfortable or threatened.

Legal controls aid in reducing the number of perpetrators. A study by Wolak, Finkelhor, and Mitchell (2009) indicate that arrests made due to online child predation increased substantially between the year 2000 and 2006.

Additionally, to foster the safeguarding of children from predation from the internet, it is essential to involve people that normally work with children.

According to Atkinson and Newton (2010), this can be achieved through the introduction of an e-safety subject into the national curriculum of all the schools. Furthermore, involving young people on how to safeguard them from online predation may provide invaluable information and address a range of issues that affect them. Furthermore, schools should ensure that they incorporate CIPA law into their school libraries. Such a law ensures that schools are compliant or have adopted recommended internet safety policies (Children's Internet Protection Act).

In conclusion, always remember that the best parental control is the parent. Setting up filters and spying on the children chat accounts may not be effective. Therefore, guardians are urged to ensure that they are in control of whatever the minors are doing online. The increased change in technological development poses additional challenges to the effective control of child predation on the internet. This necessitates the need to have both effective

and informed professional practice to develop better ways of adapting to the highly changing technologies on the internet (Atkinson and Newton, 2010).

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